GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2206
ANSWERED ON:29.08.2007
BILINGUAL ENTRIES IN THE PASSPORTS
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Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether entries in the passports issued in the country are being made in Hindi or bilingual;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Parliamentary Committee on official languages was assured that the entries would be made bilingual;

(d) if so, the reasons for not fulfilling that assurance so far; and

(e) the time by which these entries are likely to be made bilingual?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMED)

(a) & (b) At present entries in the passports are made in English as the passports are prepared as per guidelines of the International Civil Aviation Organization. According to global inter-operability of passports, entries in the passport booklets are to be in a language, which facilitates inspection of international travellers at borders. Currently for Machine Readable Travel Documents it is specified that the entered data in the passport should be in Latin alphabet characters, i.e., A to Z, and Arabic numerals, i.e., 1234567890.

(c), (d) & (e) The Parliamentary Committee on Official Languages desired that entries in Hindi in passports should be started by the end of this year. It was submitted to the Committee that National Informatics Centre will be consulted for reducing the font size and feasibility of attaching an extra page will also be looked into to take a decision accordingly. The Ministry is currently trying to streamline the passport issuance system to meet the rapidly growing demand of passports and to issue passports promptly. On implementation of these plans, the Ministry would consider bilingual entries in the passports.